

Teachers Condemn CIA, Stress Academic Freedom

Special to THE WORKER

CHICAGO — Charles Cogen was reelected president of the American Federation of Teachers, in a decisive victory over John M. Fewkes retired president of the Chicago local.

Cogen's entire slate was elected with him. The outcome was a resounding endorsement of the militant policies of the AFT, which had almost doubled its membership in the last three years to more than 125,000 and had won many collective bargaining agreements through strike action. It was a mandate for full speed ahead in pursuing the same policies.

The teachers were addressed by Harold Howe 2nd, U.S. Commissioner of Education, who cited teacher militancy as "one of the most helpful developments in education today." Calling for still greater militancy on the part of teachers, Howe urged a greater role for teachers in making policy for education.

The convention, coinciding with the union's 50th anniversary, marks the emergence of the AFT as a maturing and decisive union in the field of professional workers. The convention proceedings embodied the spirit of the union's slogan: "Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy."

The organization deplored the "recent tendency to view faculty and student criticism of American foreign policy as unhealthy and inimical to the best interests of the nation."

It pledged its support to the Empire State Federation of Teachers in its efforts to "safeguard the rights" of Arthur Rosenberg, a teacher of Rye, N. Y., who allegedly was discharged for publicly speaking in opposition to Administration policy in Vietnam.

Another resolution denounced the Central Intelligence Agency for becoming involved in the academic activities of Michigan State University, where it recruited agents among the students.

On all matters save one, the union took progressive and militant positions, from civil rights to the economic and professional status of teachers.

VIETNAM ISSUE

On Vietnam the convention failed to move beyond its previous position of "all people deplore the loss of life and re-

sources involved in the war in Vietnam therefore we support the efforts of our government to secure a lasting peace in Vietnam."

This had been the substance of the minority report coming out of the International Relations committee. The majority report, "opposing further escalation and declaring unqualified support to immediate negotiations among all parties to the



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conflict by the terms of the Geneva agreement of 1954," was defeated after lengthy debate, 292 to 173.

Efforts to effect a compromise between the two positions came too late in debate and the minority report was adopted with the votes of many who were anxious to move on to other convention business.

Members were assured, however, by those who opposed the Johnson policy that they were not bound by the parent body's stand.

PASSPORT QUESTION

The convention went on record opposing passport and visa restrictions against scholars whose research requires them to travel abroad.

The delegates voted overwhelmingly for a proposal that the federal government grant aid to education in the states on the basis of \$1,000 per teacher, to be increased by an additional \$1,000 each year until \$5,000 is reached, and that federal aid be stabilized at that figure henceforth. This would go to teachers' salaries and would cost \$2 bil-

lion at the beginning and \$10 billion when stabilized.

Backing up its strong civil rights stands with action, the convention boycotted the Aunt Jemima Kitchens restaurant in the Edgewater Beach Hotel where they were meeting. A convention committee then called in the Teamsters, Waitresses and Cooks unions, and unitedly bargained with the management, to provide the Negro hostess in the restaurant with a modern, dignified costume in place of the Aunt Jemima outfit she was compelled to wear. Management complied and also agreed to remove all Aunt Jemima symbols.

The delegates voted to urge Quaker Oats to discard the degrading Aunt Jemima symbol, and to boycott Quaker Oats products if they failed to comply.

Adopted also was a resolution urging complete academic freedom, including the right to organize, hold office or otherwise participate in political, social, professional and civil rights organizations, and the right to job security when the teacher utilizes any form of nonviolent protest, including civil disobedience against what he considers any immoral and unjust laws and policies of any public agency.

Sixteen years of free education for all, up to the age of 21, was urged, with funds voted by Congress for junior and senior colleges.

A resolution backed the movement to give 18-year-olds the right to vote.

A resolution introduced by the United Federation of College Teachers of N. Y. was adopted concerning the strike at St. John's University, which began Jan. 4, following the dismissal of 31 teachers. The resolution asked that labor relations machinery be established by local, state and Federal legislation to apply to a nonprofit religious institution.

Bayard Rustin, director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, told the convention that the Chicago Freedom Movement was building up support for a \$100-billion federal economic program for Negroes and the poor in general.

The program, which calls for \$10 billion a year over a 10-year period to "wipe out slums and provide full employment," will be unveiled Sept. 20 in N.Y. at a summit meeting of civil rights leaders, Rustin said.